

SAMHSA RESTORES HOPE AND SAVES LIVES AT 2015 VOICE AWARDS



On Wednesday, August 12, 2015, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) hosted the Tenth Annual Voice Awards program on the UCLA campus to spotlight the effects suicide has on individuals, families and communities. More than 41,000 Americans die by suicide each year. The show addressed what each of us can do to connect those in need to information, services and supports that can save lives, highlighting the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and introducing SAMHSA's "Suicide Safe" app for individuals at risk. The Suicide Safe app helps providers learn the SAFE-T approach, explore interactive sample case studies, access and share information, browse conversation starters and locate treatment options.

Chandra Wilson, star of "Grey's Anatomy," hosted the event. Opening remarks were made by Tom Coderre, Senior Advisor to the Administrator, SAMHSA.



The Voice Awards honor television and film professionals who inform the public about behavioral health by portraying people with mental and/or substance use disorders in a dignified, respectful and accurate way, and give awards to consumer/peer leaders in recovery who play a vital role in raising awareness and understanding of behavioral health conditions.

Actors Wayne Brady and Brittany Snow were given SAMHSA's Special Recognition Award for their efforts to improve public awareness and understanding of behavioral health issues and the reality of recovery. Retired Major Sam Cochran of the Memphis Police was also honored with a SAMHSA **Special Recognition Award** for his work in developing the Crisis Intervention Team in Memphis,



Tennessee. This unit has become a model for improving the way law enforcement officials respond to people experiencing mental health crises and allows for safer, more appropriate responses.

Lifetime Achievement Award for exemplary leadership in suicide prevention research and advocacy at the community, state, and national levels. DeQuincy Lezine, Ph.D., Fresno, California

Consumer/Peer Leadership Awards for sharing stories of recovery and working to improve public acceptance of people living with behavioral health issues.

- Veronica Alston, Lusby, Maryland
- Neil Campbell, M.S., Atlanta, Georgia
- Bob Carolla, J.D., Arlington, Virginia
- Dese'Rae L. Stage, Brooklyn, New York
- Cheryl Sharp, M.S.W., ALWF, Annapolis, Maryland

Young Adult Leadership Award for teaching, mentoring, and encouraging young people across the nation faced with behavioral health challenges.

- Hayley Winterberg, Glendale, Arizona





Television Productions

- “Elementary” (CBS—Series Award) for addressing substance use disorders and addiction, peer support, and the journey of recovery.
- “Empire” (FOX) for a storyline addressing bipolar disorder, the impact of trauma and grief, and suicide.
- “Madam Secretary” (CBS) for a storyline addressing mental health issues and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Film Productions

- *A Long Way Down* for addressing mental health issues, suicide, and peer support.
- *Cake* for addressing suicide and mental and substance use disorders.
- *Infinitely Polar Bear* for addressing mental health issues and bipolar disorder.
- *To Write Love on Her Arms* for addressing mental and substance use disorders, peer support, and the journey of recovery.
- *Welcome to Me* for addressing mental health issues and borderline personality disorder.

Documentary Productions

- *Mind/Game: The Unquiet Journey of Chamique Holdsclaw* for addressing mental health issues, depression, suicide, and the journey of recovery.
- *That Which I Love Destroys Me* for addressing mental and substance use disorders, PTSD, trauma, and the journey of recovery for returning military service members.

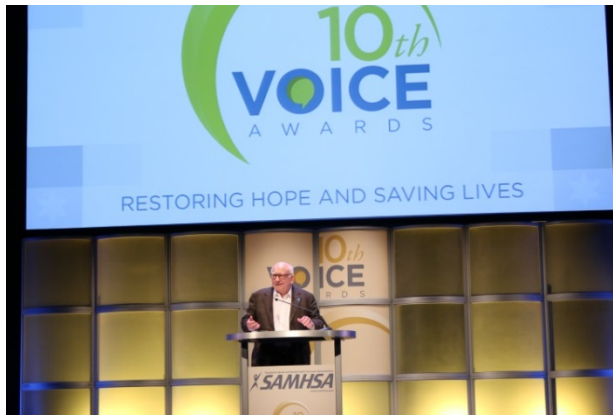


Photo of Miss California USA by MC Harris

Entertainment Industry Leadership Award

- Pixar for addressing the importance of children's mental health and emotional well-being in its latest film, *Inside Out*.

Judging and Criteria

Consumer/Peer Leaders

Nominated consumer/peer leaders are evaluated based on their outstanding contributions in all of the following areas:

- Personally demonstrated that recovery is real and possible
- Led efforts to reduce the discrimination and misperceptions associated with behavioral health conditions
- Made a positive impact on communities, workplaces, or schools

All nominees are reviewed by a panel of judges that includes consumer/peer leaders in recovery from mental and/or substance use disorders, behavioral health advocates, HHS representatives, and communication professionals.



Television and Film Professionals

Television and film production nominees are evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Relative importance of the people with behavioral health conditions to the plot, subject matter, or storyline
- Accurate representation of behavioral health information (conditions, symptoms)
- Dignified and respectful depictions of people with behavioral health conditions
- Portrayal of the concept of recovery from behavioral health conditions
- Emphasis on contributions made by people with behavioral health conditions
- Representations that reduce the discrimination and misperceptions associated with behavioral health conditions

Nominated productions do not need to reflect every element to receive an award. However, the highest ratings are reserved for those productions that emphasize the positive journey of recovery from behavioral health conditions.

All nominees are reviewed by a panel of judges that includes:

- Entertainment industry professionals
- Television and film writers and producers
- Consumer/peer leaders in recovery from mental and/or substance use disorders
- Behavioral health advocates
- HHS representatives
- Other Voice Awards program partners

The Voice Awards program is sponsored by the SAMHSA Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), which is part of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The awards program broadly defines “consumer/peer leader” as a person who has received or is receiving services for a mental and/or substance use disorder.

